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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000044

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, BEIJING FOR AF/SE NATSIOS,
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR RICHARDSON MEETS PRESIDENT BASHIR AND
CONCLUDES VISIT TO SUDAN

REF: A. A.) KHARTOUM 30

[1](#)B. B.) KHARTOUM 40

Classified By: CDA C. Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On January 10 Governor Bill Richardson met again with Sudan's President Omar El Bashir and concluded his visit to Sudan. At the end of the Richardson/Bashir meeting, representatives of the Save Darfur Coalition (which sponsored Richardson's trip) spoke briefly with Bashir. The two sides issued a press statement (ref b). Richardson secured positive statements from both Bashir and rebel groups regarding his proposal for a 60-day cease-fire, but AU envoy Selim Ahmed Selim and UN envoy Jan Eliasson have the task of making those promises effective. Richardson pushed the Sudanese on the need to accept UN peacekeepers, but there was no give-and-take on this issue. Richardson briefed both Selim and Eliasson, and they welcomed his efforts. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Governor Richardson, accompanied by CDA Hume and Richardson's foreign policy advisor, Calvin Humphrey, met President Bashir so that Richardson could report on the results of his trip the previous day to Darfur. The meeting lasted for a half-hour. At the outset, Richardson said that if real progress could be made on peace in Darfur, he would talk with colleagues in the Democratic party, as well as with the Save Darfur Coalition, regarding the need to fund development and infrastructure projects in Darfur. During the trip to Darfur, both he and representatives of Save Darfur had met rebels to urge them to accept the cease-fire, engage in the political process, and provide security for the work of humanitarian organizations.

[1](#)3. (C) Richardson said that there was an urgent need for a political process and a strategic plan. He had met briefly with Jan Eliasson, the UN envoy, who was now engaging on the issue. The immediate challenge was to use a cease-fire to launch a political process that would secure reciprocal commitments from the rebels. This process could be within the framework of the Darfur Peace Agreement, and the AU and UN could make the arrangements. In El Fasher, representatives of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and of the Sudanese Liberation Movement, Abdul Wahid faction (SLM/AW) said they would commit to such a cease-fire. Richardson urged Bashir to get this process launched before his meeting with UN Secretary General Ban in Addis Ababa on January 29.

[1](#)4. (C) Richardson said, on behalf of AMIS Force Commander Luke Aprezi, that he would like to ask that the Sudanese

military no longer paint its aircraft white, the color used by humanitarian organizations. Bashir agreed but suggested that non-combat aircraft were not necessarily included in his agreement.

15. (C) Bashir said his goal was a final settlement for Darfur. He had worked for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with southern Sudan and for peace in eastern Sudan. When the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed in Abuja on May 5, 2006, some commanders had given positive signals, but then the focus of the international community shifted from supporting the DPA to replacing AMIS with UN peace-keepers. As a consequence of this shift in attention, the rebel groups used the cease-fire to re-equip and re-supply, and then they launched new attacks in North Darfur and Kordofan. Some countries supported the rebels with arms. Others, despite having signed the DPA themselves, gave political platforms to the non-signatories. The international community should have criticized these rebels for launching new attacks and their use of new anti-aircraft weapons, but it had not.

16. (C) Bashir said he had committed to the DPA and the security provisions of that agreement. He was still willing to dialogue with the rebels and to settle the problems with them, but the effort had to be within the framework of what had been agreed to in Abuja. Another cease-fire used for re-equipping and launching new attacks was not acceptable, but, if he were asked to stop military activity or to provide security so that rebels could meet to discuss peace, he would do so within the framework of the DPA. His goal was to gain ground for peace, a full peace. When Richardson pushed again for a 60-day cease-fire, Bashir gave his promise only if the cease-fire were linked to a program or a meeting within the framework of the DPA, but not for an open-ended cease-fire.

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17. (C) Then Richardson requested and Bashir agreed that representatives of the Save Darfur Coalition join the meeting. Larry Rossin, the group's senior international adviser, said that the purpose of the group was to support the people of Darfur and that, with respect for Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, it sought peace. Ken Bacon (Refugees International) said that the group's main goal was to support humanitarian operations in Darfur. Amjad Atallah emphasized the group's concern over gender-based violence, and Michael Bergman (Center for Middle East Peace) stressed the importance of ending violence against the people of Darfur.

18. (C) Bashir thanked Richardson for arranging the meeting and said he was pleased with what he had heard. However, the Coalition, with its unbalanced picture of the situation in Darfur, had a negative impact on the prospects for peace. It should support the Darfur Peace Agreement, which the U.S. government had endorsed. Had that agreement been implemented, the situation in Darfur would have improved greatly. The Coalition only pressured the government, and it never criticized the rebels. Past actions by the Coalition had not been in line with respect for Sudan's territorial integrity.

19. (C) Bashir said he had worked for six years for peace with southern Sudan. He wanted one Sudan, at peace with itself and its neighbors. U.S. sanctions policy, supported by the Coalition, had kept the Sudanese government from delivering peace benefits to the people of southern Sudan. The sanctions policy did not support peace.

110. (C) Bashir said that before the signing of the DPA the U.S. government had pledged that, if the peace were signed, sanctions would be lifted, political relations would be restored, Sudan would be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, and debts would be rescheduled. And, that those who refused to sign the peace would be punished. None of this had happened. The rebels got time in which to

rebuild their forces. Their attacks stopped the process of implementing the peace. The right approach by the Coalition would be to criticize those who refused peace and to support those who committed to peace.

¶11. (U) At the conclusion of the session an AP reporter in the delegation asked Bashir a question regarding peace-keeping in Darfur. Bashir said that Sudan's experience with UN peace-keeping troops was not completely positive and that, in his view, members of the African Union could provide an adequate number of battalions for peace-keeping in Darfur, although they would need financial, technical, and logistic support from the United Nations.

¶12. (C) The joint statement (Ref b) was agreed by Richardson's delegation and Foreign Ministry officials. In case of any variations, Ref a and this message are the more accurate record of the two meetings with Bashir.

¶13. (C) Richardson informed AU envoy Selim Ahmed Selim (by phone) and UN envoy Eliasson (in person) of his efforts, for which both expressed appreciation.

¶14. (C) Comment: Richardson made a strong, personal effort to secure a cease-fire pledge and to give a positive impulse to the peace process to be conducted by the AU and the UN, in line with the Addis Ababa agreement of November 16. Both Selim and Eliasson are now challenged to make concrete the commitment to a cease-fire, as expressed in the joint statement. Their activity in the period before the scheduled January 29 Bashir/Ban meeting at the African Union summit in Addis Ababa will be crucial for relaunching the peace process. End comment.

¶15. (U) Governor Richardson did not have an opportunity to review this message prior to his departure.
HUME